

# OLD IN ARCADE

FREIGHTED WITH

TREASURES

FOR BOYS

AND GIRLS

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1883, by E. G. Ridout & Co., in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

Vol. I.

E. G. RIDOUT & CO., 10 BARGAIN ST. BUILDERS.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1883.

TERMS: \$1.75 per ANNUM IN ADVANCE. No. per Mo. No. NEWS-DEALERS.

No. 18.

## A Voyage to the Gold Coast;

OR,

Jack Bond's Quest.

By FRANK H. CONVERSE,

Author of "Harry Hall's Log Book," "Blowin' out to Sea," "CHAPTER VII. of Alice Fendwick," "Darcy," etc.

### CHAPTER VII.

SCARCELY had Marie's words escaped her lips, than Jack was on his feet, and had reached the window at one bound. Nor did he stop there. Taking in the situation at a glance, he seized a pendant limb of the big elm which shaded the little piazza in summer-time, and as he had done many times in sport, swung himself downward into the garden-path like an acrobat.

"You mean coward—get out of this!" he exclaimed, with flashing eyes, as Augustus began a stammered explanation, in which the words "just for fun," alone were intelligible.

And Jack further emphasized his words by setting the unfortunate Augustus by his immaculate collar with one sinewy hand, while the other clutched his garments in the rear.

Luckily, the gate was wide open, or Augustus might have carried it from the hinges in his onward progress. For, with an exertion of strength which, to his victim, seemed almost incredible, Jack sent him spinning between the gate-posts into the road, with such momentum that, only for a sand-beap on the opposite side, into which he plunged on all-fours in a most undignified manner, it is somewhat uncertain where he might have brought up.

Now, the light-house at the end of the point, was a famous resort for lovers of fish-dinners and clam-chowders. And in the summer months, teams from Barnmouth were constantly passing and repassing the Bond house, on their way to and from this place of good cheer.

"Hallo, Gus! what's up, eh?"

With horror, Augustus awoke from his recumbent position, to meet the eagerly inquisitive gaze of his friend Chester Martin, who had just then pulled up directly opposite him. It was a Barnmouth House team, and sitting beside Chester, was a young man who the gilded (and would-be-fast) youth of Barnmouth delighted to honor—Mr. Courtney Pinkney, who spoke of himself vaguely as a "Southerner."

He was dark complexioned, with a somewhat salted face, dark hair and eyes, and a thin moustache of the same color.

"Doctors told me I'd be goin' too doosid fast," was young Mr. Pinkney's laconic explanation of his presence in Barnmouth some months earlier than the regulation water-place season; "and I must hunt out some quiet place, with lots of ozone, and iodine, and sea-air, and all that sort of thing, close down to the sea—that's how I happened down to this little dead-end-of-a-town."

Which might or might not have been the case; but, as we shall see more of Mr. Pinkney further on in the story, we may learn more about him.

"Hope you ain't been fighting," Jones, considerably remarked Mr. Pinkney, his black eyes gleaming with amusement under the brim of the soft, black, "slouch" hat, which he always affected, as being indispensable to the toilet of a Southerner.

"I had some words with that low-lived Bond fellow, in there," explained Gus, with a very red face, glancing angrily back toward the garden, as a burst of unbridled laughter reached his ears; "and, rather than have any disturbance where there are females around, I kind of hurried off—for, when my temper does get the upper hand," Augustus said, with a portentous shudder of his head, "I'm apt to make things lively for a time."

Gus' particular friend, Chester, thrust his tongue into his cheek, and gave his companion a sick kick.

"Yes, Jones; 'I've heard that you're a very generous fellow," began Pinkney, gravely, when, glancing at the group in the garden, he caught sight of Marie's face, as, having removed her shade hat, she stood swinging it carelessly by the strings, while she talked with Jack and Dick Earle. He stopped in his speech and uttered a suppressed exclamation.

"What's the trouble, Court?" asked his companion, as he drove on, leaving Augustus brushing the sand from his rumpled plumage.

"Nothing," was the careless reply; "only I

Messrs. Augustus Jones and Chester Martin were numbered.

So that I think young Mr. Martin's mental gears was very far out of the way.

Leaving the two to their own devices for the present, let us now return to the discomfited Augustus, whom we left by the roadside, much disturbed in body and mind.

Having brushed himself and settled his collar, if not his choler, young Mr. Jones approached Doctor Garner's buggy, with the evident intention of taking his seat therein. But Dick Earle walked down to the gate at the same moment.

"See here, Gus," he observed very quietly; "I guess that you needn't mind getting in there, again."

"Why not?" growled the astonished youth, pausing, with one foot on the rim of the hub, and one glewed hand holding the rail.

"Because," answered Dick, very audibly; "when a fellow forgets that he's a gentleman, or ought to

"At my thoughts," replied Jack; "but to change the subject—do you mean to fix for college this summer?"

"That's just what Doctor Garner has been bering at me about for a month," Dick answered, carelessly, as with both hands in his pockets, he executed a waltz step in the gravel path. "He was in a regular rage when I told him that I didn't think it would pay, and that I'd sight rather go off on a yachting trip to Mt. Desert, or somewhere," added this heedless youth, who was throwing away the best days of his life in aimless pursuit of present pleasure.

His friend looked at him steadily for a moment or two.

"Dick," he said, quite gravely, "do you know, I can't understand, for the life of me, how it is that a young fellow with an average amount of brains—"

"Ah, I suppose not," replied Dick, with affected lightness. Then pausing a moment, he spoke in the serious tone peculiar to himself, when the nobler part of his nature came to the surface:

"Jack," he said, "I believe I should be happier if I could change places with you to-day."

"I know you would," laughed Jack, "but then, my boy, I'm by no means sure that I'd change with you. Why, perhaps I shall be a millionaire before fall, who knows?"

"What do you mean?" asked his friend in some surprise—for it was something very unusual for steady-going Jack Bond to talk after this fashion.

"Come down to the Sea Watch to-morrow, and I'll tell you," was all the answer

ever he received, and after talking together for some little time longer, they separated—Jack entering the house, while Dick Earle, mounting into his guardian's buggy, drove slowly and thoughtfully home, passing Augustus, just as that scowling individual had entered Barnmouth village.

### CHAPTER VIII.

OS arriving in front of Dr. Garner's handsome house, Dick turned the horse up one driveway into the spacious yard, where Johnson, the colored man of all work, was awaiting his arrival.

"Doctor wish to see you in de study sah," said Johnson, as he took the reins.

"Aren, what is it?" muttered Dick a little apprehensively, as his conscience began bringing before his mental vision sundry misdeeds connected with the past week.

Nothing very venial, it is true; for with all Dick Earle's many faults, he had a healthy distaste for the petty evils that, affected by the young fellows in his own station in life, are so almost sure to ripen into sin and suffering. His sins were those of omission rather than commission. This was in part due to Jack Bond's good influence, and partly to a certain nobility of character inherited from his deceased father.

How much the prayers of the Christian mother, long since passed away, had to do with Dick's resistance of grosser temptations is only known to Him who heard them, but the great heretofore showed.

With some trepidation Dick entered the house, passed directly upstairs, and knocked at the door of the room which the doctor persisted in denominating as a "study"—perhaps because so little of the kind went on between its walls.

"Come in," said a deep but not unkindly voice—and Dick entered.

Doctor Garner was a tall and rather spare man, with a very bald head and a grizzly, white moustache.

He was nervous to a painful degree, and, to a stranger, his jerky and unsteady movements were



"YOU MEAN COWARD—GET OUT OF THIS!" EXCLAIMED JACK, WITH FLASHING EYES.

thought the young girl in the garden there, looked like some one I used to know, that is, all. Who is she, anyway?"

"Think her name's Lafleur, or something like it. She's boarding with Mr. Bond—belongs South, somewhere, and was sent North for her health," answered Chester, kicking the gallant steed with his whip, as a bend in the road nearly concealed the Bond house from view.

Pinkney only said "ah," and seemed to lose all interest in the matter a moment or two later. But even Chester, obtuse as he was, noticed that for the remainder of the ride, and even under the seductive influence of a most appetizing chowder, his companion was singularly silent—even thoughtful.

"Somebody must have taken a rise out of him, playing cards, last night," thought young Mr. Martin. But at the little games of chance, held nightly in Mr. Courtney Pinkney's room, at the Barnmouth House, no skill had as yet been found superior to that of the young Southerner, who, it was whispered, won considerable sums, in small amounts, from the would-be-fast youths of Barnmouth—among whom

be one, any way, I can do without the pleasure of his company—see?"

Augustus saw. Easy-going Dick Earle sometimes had an unexpectedly blunt way of putting things, which often surprised himself as much as it did others.

And so Augustus Jones, muttering something unpleasant under his breath, made his way back to Barnmouth on foot, vowing with every step that he'd get even with the whole of 'em, some day.

"But it is so dull—I must run in and tell Mrs. Bond," exclaimed Maria, with a merry laugh, as Augustus disappeared from view. She ran lightly up the path as she spoke—Dick Earle watching her retreating form with a puzzled expression on his face.

"I wish I could think where I had seen Miss Lafleur, or some one ever so much like her," he said, knitting his brows.

"Yes?" Jack observed, in a non-committal sort of way, hardly able to suppress a smile.

"Yes," returned his friend, "and it's queer I can't remember. What are you laughing at, anyway?" he added, curiously.











## THE CREW OF THE ARGOSY.

CRUISE N. COATES.

One back is new, our boards are gay,  
We leap on board at call,  
To fill short tragic fables play,  
Or learn the leebow's wail.

At home on ocean's dreamy swell,  
The gaffer's not more free,  
And oh, the tales our shipmates tell  
Of how the lands were free.

If midnight watch we curts to keep,  
Or shuddering sail we hoist,  
Sternward before the wind we sweep,  
Though high the billows curl.

And some may know the joy we share,  
Some who thus have sailed,  
Our fathers had no ship so fair,  
Whose shores no light was veiled.

The boys and girls of other times  
Shores no light was veiled,  
No light was theirs of distant climes,  
No magic spell was veiled.

But dream shall of that sea no more,  
And sunny shores no more,  
And sunny shores no more,  
And sunny shores no more.

## Don Gordon's Shooting-Box.\*

By HARRY CASTLEMON.

Author of "Frank on a Gunboat," "The Boy Trap-  
per," "The Sportsman's Club Affairs," etc., etc.

## CHAPTER VII.

## HOW DON GOT IN.

"Don't be in too great a hurry. Let me get out of your sight," said Clarence Duncan, as he crept through the fence, and Don, whose suspicions had not been aroused, was careful to obey. When he thought that Clarence had been allowed time to reach the academy, he passed through the opening and moved toward Dick Henderson's post. He saw the latter when he came out from behind his box and walked along his beat, and remembering Tom Fisher's words of caution—that it would not be safe to approach Dick's post openly, for fear that the officer of the day or the corporal might be somewhere within sight—Don sought concealment by throwing himself at full length in the grass. He expected to see Dick turn about and go behind his box again; and, consequently, he pushed a little aside when the sentry took up a position directly in front of him, and called for the corporal of the guard.

Don did not know what to make of it; but he did know that if he stayed where he was, detection and punishment were inevitable. He still had one chance for escape, and he lost no time in improving it. He jumped up and took to his heels, trusting to the darkness and to his uniform to conceal his identity. He was in the light of foot, and, by doing some of the best running he succeeded in dodging around the corner of the academy building just as the corporal three open the door of the guard-room. The signal, which had produced such an effect upon Dick Henderson, he had given by the merest accident. It was one that Fisher, by some oversight, had neglected to teach him, although he had let him into the secret of all the other signs and pass-words.

"A mis is as good as a mile, but all that was a pretty close shave," said Don, to himself, as he opened the back door and felt his way up the stairs. "I can't understand why Dick challenged me, unless because my approach was discovered by somebody else, who would have reported him if he hadn't tried to stop me."

On reaching the second landing, Don moved cautiously along the hall, spelling the last syllable of the pass-ward as he went. Greatly to his surprise, he met with no response. When his hands came in contact with the door, he began searching for the knob; but when he turned it, he did not open for

"Now, here's a gun," thought Don, who did not know whether to laugh or get angry over the predicament in which he so unexpectedly found himself. Where's Fisher? He knew very well that he couldn't get to my room without assistance, and yet he has deserted me. If that is the sort of fellow he is, he'll not eat any more pancakes this winter at my expense."

He was satisfied himself that Tom was not on hand, as he had promised to be; Don placed his ear close to the key-hole, and found that he could distinctly hear the footsteps of the floor-guard, as he paced up and down the hall on the other side of the door. There was a fellow who could and would help him, if he could only attract his attention. Waiting, with all the patience he could command, until the sentry came down to that end of the hall again, Don tapped softly on the door, and, in a peculiar manner. The footsteps ceased on the instant; the sentry was listening. Again Don gave the mystic signal—one quick rap; then, after a little pause, three more raps, delivered in rapid succession, and presently a voice came through the key-hole.

"B-I-e-e-i" it whispered.

"Room!" whispered Don, in reply.

"What?"

"Go."

A moment later a key rattled in the lock, the door swung open, and Don stood face to face with the sentry.

"That's just what I demanded the latter."

"Where's Fisher?" said Don, "I should like to know," answered Don. "He said he would be here to let me in, but I haven't seen anything of him."

"It's a pretty fellow," exclaimed the sentry, "I don't know whether you can reach your room or not. The guards have been aroused, and I am expecting the officer of the day every minute. But I'll do the best I can for you. Stay here till I come back."

The sentry was not more than a quarter of a minute. He went as far as the head of the stairs that led to the floor below, and then he turned and ran back on tip-toes. "You're too late," said he, "on the officer of the day is down stairs, and he'll be up here in a second. You might as well come after me and give yourself up, for the boy who comes after me will not pass you."

"I can't help that," replied Don, "I'll not give myself up, by a long way." The sentry had seen many a boy in a tight corner, but he had never before seen a boy who took matters as coolly as Don did. All the other students of his acquaintance would have been frightened when they found that every avenue of escape was closed against them; but Don was as serene as a summer's morning.

"You're a plucky one," said the sentry, "and I am sorry that I can not help you. If my rifle—Get out of sight, quick! *pauc!*" He added, as a heavy step sounded on the stairs. "That's the of-

as an honorable boy ought to do, or would he seek to screen himself by making a clean breast of everything? While the sentry was turning these matters over in his mind, the officer of the day opened the door of Don's dormitory.

"It's all over now," he thought he, "and the next thing is the investigation. I don't believe I shall have another opportunity to speak to Gordon tonight, for my relief ought to be along now; but I must see him the first thing in the morning, and find out what sort of a story he intends to tell when he is handed up. If he has nerve enough to keep a still tongue in his head—"

The sentry brought his scabbard to a close, and stood looking the very picture of astonishment. Just then the officer of the day and his attendant came out of Don's room, and there was nothing in their faces to indicate that they had made any discovery. They looked into the other dormitories, and then came back to the lower end of the hall and tried the door that led to the fire-escape. It was locked, and everything seemed to be all right.

"Sentry," said the officer of the day, in stern tones, "Are you sure you are telling me the truth when you say that no one has passed you tonight?" "Yes, sir; I am," answered the boy, looking his



questioner squarely in the eye. "No one has passed across this floor since I came on post." "When this matter has been sifted to the bottom, as it certainly will be, a fine reckoning awaits somebody," said the officer. "Corporal, we will go to the next floor."

When the two had disappeared, and the sentry's eyes were turned in the room, he saw the door of the dormitories above, he pulled his key from his pocket and quickly opened the door behind which Don Gordon stood, trying to make up his mind to something. He did not expect to get into his room that morning, but the question he was trying to solve was: Should he stay there in the cold and take his chances of falling-in with the rest of the Fleeves when they were marched down to the drill-room to answer to roll-call, or should he give himself up, and ask permission to sit by the guard-room door, until he was thawed out? He was very much surprised when the door opened, and he saw the sentry beckoning to him.

"Gordon," said the latter, in a hurried whisper, "you're safe. Did you put a dummy in your bed before you came out?"

Don replied that he did.

"Well, it must be a perfect one, for the officer of the day went in there with a light and never saw anything to excite his suspicions. It's the greatest wonder in the world to me that he didn't miss your door."

"My clothes were there," answered Don, calmly. "I took my dress-out of the closet and put it on a chair by the side of my bed, turning the coat inside out and donning up the skirts of it so that it would look like a fatigue coat. What did the fellow have to say about it, anyhow?"

The sentry could not waste much time in conversation, for every moment was precious; but he said

enough to give Don an idea of what had passed between himself and the officer of the day, and to enable him to give Fisher and Duncan a very accurate account of it.

"You have got Porter and me in all the red of eyes of a bad scrape," said the sentry, in conclusion. "Now keep mum, or if you speak at all, deny everything, and this night's work will prove to be the most bewildering piece of business in the way of your kind that has ever happened to the academy. Go to your room while the way is open to you, and be quick about it."

Don, whose teeth were chattering with the cold, lost no time in acting upon this suggestion. His first act was to hang his dress-suit in the closet, and his next to deposit in its place on the chair the suit he had on and which he proceeded to pull off with all possible haste. Then he tumbled into bed and covered himself up, just as the floor-guard's relief came up the stairs.

"That was another close shave," thought Don; "and now comes something else. I hope the investigation will not be a very searching one, for, if it is, the whole thing is bound to come out. I am always in for a good time when I can have it without getting anybody into difficulty; but when it comes to taking a deliberate lie about it—that's a huckle-berry beyond my persuasion."

"I say, Don!" whispered Porter, from his bed.

"Great Moss!" was the culprit's mental ejaculation.

"Was he awake when I came in?" If he was, I am in for lectures by the mile."

"I say, Don!" whispered Porter, in a louder tone.

"M!" said Don, drowsily.

"I thought I heard some one come in just now."

"Very likely you did. The officer of the day has been in here."

"The officer of the day!" repeated Porter, who had learned to read that official as much as some of the other boys disliked him. "What did he want?"

"Is there anything wrong?"

"He wanted to make sure that we were both safely stowed away in our little beds. Wake me when you hear the morning gun."

This was the substance of the story that Don told his two companions as they crept about the grounds arm-in-arm. They listened in amazement, and complimented Don's presence of mind in no measured terms. Don said he didn't look up to it as much of an exploit—had almost any boy could have done the same thing under the same circumstances, adding—

"But there are two or three matters that I want cleared up, and at least one on which I wish to come to the plainest kind of an understanding with you. What made Henderson hall me?"

"I don't know, I am sure," replied Duncan. "He made the biggest kind of a blunder, didn't he?"

"I'll tell you what I think about it," said Tom.

"I don't really know that there was somebody else watching you, and that if he didn't challenge you, he would be reported for neglect of duty."

"That was the construction I put upon his conduct," said Don.

"We can't expect a fellow to get himself into trouble for the sake of keeping another out of it, you know," chimed in Clarence Duncan.

"Of course not. Now, Fisher, what was the reason you were not there at that door to let me in?"

"I was to blame for that," said Clarence. He knew Don would be sure to ask that question, and, while the latter was telling his story, he had begun to make up his mind how he would answer it.

"When I was running toward the academy I heard footsteps in the guard-room, and, believing that the relief was being called, I dodged behind the building to wait until they began the round of the post."

Just then Henderson challenged, and shortly afterward some one ran by and went into the academy through the back door. I supposed it was you; and believing that you were trying to get away, I went to the door to see if you were there."

"I was to blame for that," said Clarence. He knew Don would be sure to ask that question, and, while the latter was telling his story, he had begun to make up his mind how he would answer it.

"When I was running toward the academy I heard footsteps in the guard-room, and, believing that the relief was being called, I dodged behind the building to wait until they began the round of the post."

Just then Henderson challenged, and shortly afterward some one ran by and went into the academy through the back door. I supposed it was you; and believing that you were trying to get away, I went to the door to see if you were there."

"I was to blame for that," said Clarence. He knew Don would be sure to ask that question, and, while the latter was telling his story, he had begun to make up his mind how he would answer it.

"When I was running toward the academy I heard footsteps in the guard-room, and, believing that the relief was being called, I dodged behind the building to wait until they began the round of the post."

Just then Henderson challenged, and shortly afterward some one ran by and went into the academy through the back door. I supposed it was you; and believing that you were trying to get away, I went to the door to see if you were there."

"I was to blame for that," said Clarence. He knew Don would be sure to ask that question, and, while the latter was telling his story, he had begun to make up his mind how he would answer it.

"When I was running toward the academy I heard footsteps in the guard-room, and, believing that the relief was being called, I dodged behind the building to wait until they began the round of the post."

Just then Henderson challenged, and shortly afterward some one ran by and went into the academy through the back door. I supposed it was you; and believing that you were trying to get away, I went to the door to see if you were there."

"I was to blame for that," said Clarence. He knew Don would be sure to ask that question, and, while the latter was telling his story, he had begun to make up his mind how he would answer it.

"When I was running toward the academy I heard footsteps in the guard-room, and, believing that the relief was being called, I dodged behind the building to wait until they began the round of the post."

Just then Henderson challenged, and shortly afterward some one ran by and went into the academy through the back door. I supposed it was you; and believing that you were trying to get away, I went to the door to see if you were there."







THE GOLDEN ARGOSY.

100



## THE KITTENS' READING LESSON.

MRS. SARAH K. KATHAM.

My two little kits are trying to read!  
 Was ever so many a sight 'n' you will hear,  
 I believe that the next time they'll be there,  
 They'll be wanting to learn how to write.

Down on the floor is Marian's book,  
 With pages, so both red and blue,  
 While each little puss, with paw outstretched,  
 Is pointing to A, B, C and C.

Tabby sits still, and looks very wise,  
 As though she were trying to think;  
 While Jerry looks over her shoulder,  
 With a very little nod and wink.

Says Tabby aloud they are getting on,  
 For never a word do they say or hear,  
 They yawn, and I think between you and me,  
 They are aching to run off and play.

Jetty, at last, jumps up in disgust;  
 "I hate this Table's lesson," she says,  
 Then both little kittens, on felloe intrude,  
 Push the book far away, out of sight.

## CAPTAIN BESS.

BY WILLIS BOYD ALLEN.

"I SAY, fellows, what shall we do to-morrow?"  
 Tom Lowell had thrown himself down on the grass with the rest of the boys, in the shade of an old apple-tree by the school-house fence.

"Play off that matter with the Oldport nine!"

"Too blasin' hot!"

"Go fishing down 'n' the river. Pete Walworth got hold of the biggest trout ever saw just below the dam, when it rained so last Monday."

"Oh, the fish you don't get are always the biggest; besides, you can't catch trout with half a dozen fellows racketin' round in the bushes," said Tom, who always assumed the privilege of veto on such occasions.

"Stay at home and study for examination," shyly suggested one curly-headed boy, his black eyes twinkling with mischief.

"Obbs!" rose a chorus of cries from the rest.

"Put him out! Roll him in the grass! Stand him on his head!"

The culprit escaped punishment for the moment by dexterously wringing himself into the low boughs of the apple-tree, where, however, he sat dangling his feet and laughing to such an extent that he presently tumbled into the hands of his enemies, who proceeded calmly to carry out the sentence imposed upon him.

"I knew he'd laugh himself off, give him time enough," panted Tom, as he deposited the curly head right side up once more. "Now, don't anybody dare to say, 'Study in vacation' to this crowd again. I'll tell you what I propose for to-morrow: a good, long tramp on Saddleback."

After some discussion, this plan was unanimously adopted, and the group was breaking up, when one of the quietest of the company spoke for almost the first time.

"Why not invite the girls?"

The boys cast funny looks of dismay at each other, and evidently deliberated whether to serve Bert Johnson, who offered this amendment, as they had the rash speaker shortly before. Down they all sat on the grass again.

"Well, what about 'em?"

"They'll spoil all the fun."

"Can't go through bushes—"

"Scream at a green snake!"

"Get tired out before we start!"

"Always laughin' at a feller!" complained Dick, as a climax.

"Look here," said Bert; "I don't see why we can't have all the better time if they go—those in our class, I mean. That will make just eleven of us, all told, and we can take baskets and have a lunch on the mountain."

"There's something in that," remarked the leader, thoughtfully. "It was plain that the last suggestion told heavily with the convention. The result was that Tom and Bert were chosen a committee to notify the girls and complete arrangements for the excursion."

The day, accordingly, the whole eleven met in high spirits at the old sawmill, and, dividing the burdens as equally as possible (it must be confessed that the boys were not eager to take more than their share), started up the heavily-wooded slope that formed the eastern spur of Saddleback. For some distance there was a good path, but after the first half mile it grew more and more indistinct, until it was only marked by a bare rock, or a red, crumbling ledge here and there, where occasional footpaths had, in the course of years, worn away the surface. Soon afterward they passed out upon the ledges, which continued almost without tree or shrub of any kind to very summit.

Here the boys, who had been stopping to rest, began to laugh at stumblers, and to feel birch-bark. It was high noon when they reached the little level spot on the top of the mountain, and made preparations for dinner.

Here the girls, who had by no means proved the weakest during the ascent, fairly shone forth. While the boys were clumsily bringing the tops of various rocks in their endeavor to find a servicable table, the girls had already found a smooth, flat stone, and chosen a sheltered corner in the lee of a huge boulder, had deftly spread napkins, and displayed thereon bread and cake, and slices of cold meat, together with two pies, in the most tempting manner. They soon discussed these proceedings, and gathered with a war-hoop.

"How about plates?" asked one of them. "You can't eat squash pie with your fingers."

"I know!" cried Bessie Lowell, Tom's sister.

"Here, Bert, let me have a good, clean strip of your birch-bark!"

"But it's all rough outside, and it curls right up the minute you let go of it!"

"I'll show you—!" and she quickly stripped off flake after flake of the delicate inner bark.

"Girls, sit down on these rocks 'round the table. Boys outside. Table's too small for everybody."

The boys meekly took their places, and began uttering heart-rending moans of hunger.

"Pass them over some cold ham and bread," commanded Bessie again. "And here are two tin dippers they can have among them."

"What's in that can?"

"Coffee; milk in the other. Which'll you have?"

"Being healthy, country young folks, they preferred milk, of which there was, fortunately, enough for all. Lunch over, the boys stretched themselves out comfortably on the rocks, while the girls cleared up.

Then they paired off to collect specimens and discovered the various points of interest in the beautiful prospect of lake, river, and forest at their feet. Minutes passed swiftly, and grew to hours, before they were warned of their negligence by the chill of approaching evening, and the long shadows of the mountains, darkening whole valleys and creeping up toward the summit where they stood. Hastily col-

each other, and even the boys looked nervously over their shoulders at the black openings among the trees on every side. Overhead the wind now and then moaned drearily, but whenever that sound ceased, the forest was as still as if it were spell-bound.

"Bess," said Tom, trying to speak indifferently, "what next?"

"The girl looked round at the little company, who watched her with appealing eyes, like a flock of sheep."

"It's got to stay here all night!"

"Profound sensation among the sheep."

"Our folks 'll be just wild," suggested Dick. "They'll hunt for us at night."

"What, we can't help it if they do. Perhaps they'll find us. At any rate, it's no use to go any farther. Flossie's sprained her ankle, two of you boys have lame arms from tumbling on that root, and we might just as well stop here till we can see where we are."

"That's right," Bessie, said Bert Johnson, warmly, as he stepped forward. "You've taken command, and you shall keep it. Suppose you tell us what to do, and see how quick we'll obey orders!"

"Baskets in this corner!" commanded the captain. "Two boys bring sticks for a fire; one more kindle it against that rock—here are some matches I brought on purpose. Girls, let's get supper!"



THE EFFECT WAS MAGICAL.

lecting their bundles, they turned their faces toward—what?

Two of the boys pointed in one direction; three girls insisted on exactly the opposite point of the compass as their true course; the rest held all sorts of opinions between these two extremes.

"Good deal like Old Probabilities," growled Dick Bancroft, "Northeast variation" to southwest, with clearer weather and local rains."

The coolness of evening increased, and their shadows lengthened perceptibly as they talked.

"Well," said Bessie, decisively, "I believe *this* is the way, and that's where I'm going. You may follow or not, as you please. I'm sure I remember that rock with the cup-moss on it."

As she spoke, she started off along the rough slope, keeping, as nearly as possible, the direction she had indicated. The rest were but too glad to leave the responsibility with her, and followed without a word of protest.

It was not long before they entered the forest which covered the lower portion of the mountain, and here trouble fairly began. The sun was below the hills on the opposite side of the valley, and the dark silence of the wood oppressed the little party more and more. To add to their misfortune, they found it impossible to pursue anything like a straight line. The ground was covered with fallen and decayed trees and fern-traced bowlders, around and over which they scrambled and plunged, back and forth, until it was evident that they were spending time and strength to no purpose. Then they gathered about the foot of a tall hemlock, and held council.

One or two of the girls trembled and clung to

It was wonderful how much more endurable their lot seemed when everybody had set to work with all their might; for, like a good leader, Bessie left no one idle.

Before many minutes had passed, a bright fire was snapping, and crackling, and throwing its cheerful light upon the sturdy figures of the boys, as they plotted to and fro with armfuls of wood. As soon as anybody finished the task he had been set to perform, the captain made him gather wood, so that a generous pile was soon heaped up for use during the night. The girls, on their part, now produced the baskets, with the remnants of lunch, which they tried to make look as delicious as they really crumbly condition would admit, among the birch-bark platters. Presently there came a shout from Tom, of all in the darkest corner.

"Hoory! I've found a spring! There's no small water in it, but it's cold as ice. One of you fellows bring the dippers, will you?"

"Well," said Bessie, "I can only spare the one without a handle. I want the other to cook with."

"Cook! Why, what on earth—"

"Eggs! I didn't say anything about 'em upstairs—on the summit. I mean—because I was afraid you'd laugh at me for bringing them. I'll bet 'em hard, so we can eat without spoons. There's a little paper of salt in that brown basket, I guess."

It was a pleasant meal, after all, though not so noisy as the dinner had been. The boys left the choice of portions of the supper for the girls, who were too much disturbed by the strangeness and loneliness of their situation to be very hungry.

A wailing cry arose far off on the mountain-side. Dick started, and moved nearer to the fire.

"Owls!" said Bessie, calmly. "Don't be afraid, Dick, we won't let 'em hurt you—will we, girls?"

Dick looked fuddled, and subsided into his squabs.

How dark it was! It seemed to close about the little circle of her tent-shoot—over walls and a ceiling, all hung with mourning drapery.

When the last crumb had been eaten, the coffee drunk, and the baskets laid away once more, Bessie proceeded to divide off the night into watches.

"One boy and one girl to take care of them and keep the fire going, in each watch," she said, "Tom and I will sit up till eleven, to begin with. The rest of you go to sleep."

It was much as if she had the power to make them fly, so round and wide-awake were their eyes.

At last, however, one after another, exhausted with the efforts of the day, they grew drowsy, and presently dropped their sleepy heads on either their shoulders, or on mossy rocks, whichever happened to be nearest.

Nine—half-past nine—ten o'clock passed. Tom and brave Little Bessie sat motionless as statues. Suddenly the girl started, and listened.

"Tom!" she whispered.

Tom did not answer. He was fast asleep.

Bessie looked about her. At a little distance was the group of her tent-shoot—over walls and a ceiling, all hung with mourning drapery.

Again she started, and this time rose and shook Tom by the shoulder.

"Tom—bark!"

He listened, rubbing his eyes sleepily. Then he, too, heard it. A long, low rumble, rising, falling, dying away in solemn echoes among the hills.

"Bess, there's going to be a storm!"

"Yes," she answered, hurriedly.

"What shall we do? We shall be drenched through and through, and—any—know how the lightning struck on the mountain last week!"

"Yes, they found the trees all twisted up, and burnt down through."

"If we could only give a signal," she whispered, "so that they could find us, I know father's out hunting for us somewhere. Here she was interrupted by a peal of thunder louder and more ominous than the last. It was almost immediately followed by a distant report, which sounded like a falling tree, and frightened them even more than the thunder.

By this time Bert was awake and stood by their side. As he reached them, the sharp crack was heard once more.

"Hallo!" cried Bert, joyfully. "I know that sound; it's Pete Walworth's old Queen Anne music! They're looking for us, two or three miles from here!"

The rest of the party, roused by the shout and the rolling of the thunder, now joined them, with pale faces and quivering lips.

Again the rattle shot, a little farther away. Tom started.

"Good!" cried Bessie, clapping her hands; "that's a splendid plan!"

"What's go?" said Tom, dismally.

"Why, grunting! Let's all groan at once, and maybe they'll hear us. Wait till I give the word, then make the awfulest noise you ever can. Now—one, two, three!"

Whereupon arose such a hideous combination of shrieks, groans, and wallops, as might well have frightened every wildcat on the mountain out of its wits.

Bessie held up her hand, and all listened eagerly. Sure enough. Pop! pop! came the far-off answer from the hills.

"Yow—yow—yow!" screamed the party again. Bang, bang—bang, a long, low rumble, and, gaining power every instant, roared far up above the surrounding tree-tops, waving its red signals and to and fro, as if it were waving its hand for the object of their search.

A hail of hail of guns greeted this movement, and, just as a great shout came hissing down into their midst, a cheerous voice was heard close at hand, following it, a long, low rumble, or more men, or boys, who were bent in upon the little party, with flaming torches in their hands, for the first time.

But there was no time to talk, and, with the disbeliever, or rather one carried on the shoulders of a stout, bearded fellow, the party followed down, or more men, or boys, who were bent in upon the little party, with flaming torches in their hands, for the first time.

There was no time to talk, and, with the disbeliever, or rather one carried on the shoulders of a stout, bearded fellow, the party followed down, or more men, or boys, who were bent in upon the little party, with flaming torches in their hands, for the first time.

There was no time to talk, and, with the disbeliever, or rather one carried on the shoulders of a stout, bearded fellow, the party followed down, or more men, or boys, who were bent in upon the little party, with flaming torches in their hands, for the first time.

There was no time to talk, and, with the disbeliever, or rather one carried on the shoulders of a stout, bearded fellow, the party followed down, or more men, or boys, who were bent in upon the little party, with flaming torches in their hands, for the first time.

There was no time to talk, and, with the disbeliever, or rather one carried on the shoulders of a stout, bearded fellow, the party followed down, or more men, or boys, who were bent in upon the little party, with flaming torches in their hands, for the first time.